

## Message Text

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11  
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05

SAM-01 DHA-02 /065 W  
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R 291000Z JUL 76  
FM AMEMBASSY DACCA  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1501  
INFO AMCONGEN CALCUTTA  
AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD  
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

C O N F I D E N T I A L DACCA 3857

EO 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PINT, BG  
SUBJ: POLITICAL PARTY REGULATION PROMULGATED

REF: DACCA 3835

SUMMARY. ON JULY 29, PRESIDENT SAYEM ISSUED MARTIAL LAW REGULATION NO. 22 OF 1976, "THE POLITICAL PARTIES REGULATION" WHICH IS DESIGNED TO LIMITED THE NUMBER OF PARTIES AND THE SCOPE OF POLITICAL ACTIVITY. BEFORE THEY ARE ALLOWED TO OPERATE, ALL POLITCIAL PARTIES MUST SUMIT TO THE GOVERNMENT A CONSTITUTION, A LIST OF FRONT GROUPS, AND MANIFESTO AND PARTY PROGRAM FOR APPROVAL. WITHIN THREE WEEKS, THE GOVERNMENT WILL INFORM A PARTY IN WRITING WHETHER OR NOT IT MEETS THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE REGULATION. THE REGULATIONS BAN "FOREIGN-AIDED" PARTIES, UNDERGROUND PARTIES, "PREJUDICIAL ACTIVITIES", AND INDEPENDENT CANDIDATES FOR ELECTION. IN A SEPARATE ANNOUNCEMENT, THE BDG HAS DIRECTED THAT FROM JULY 30 TO SEPTEMBER 1, ALL POLITICAL PARTIES SHALL BE CONFINED TO "INDOOR ACTIVITIES" IN ORDER TO SUBMIT THEIR CONSTITUTIONS AND PROGRAMS TO THE GOVERNMENT FOR APPROVAL. END SUMMARY.

1. THE POLITICAL PARTIES REGULATION PROMULGATED JULY 29  
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CONTAINES SPECIFIC DIRECTIONS FOR ALL PHASES OF POLITICAL ACTIVITY. THE FOLLOWING ARE THE MAIN POINTS:

-- "FOREIGN-AIDED" PARTIES ARE BANNED. THE REGULATION  
DEFINES SUCH PARTIES AS THOSE "FORMED OR ORGANIZED AT

THE INSTANCE OF ANY GOVERNMENT ... AFFILIATED OR ASSOCIATED WITH ANY POLITICAL PARTY OF A FOREIGN COUNTRY ..."  
OR WHICH RECEIVE ANY AID, "FINANCIAL OR OTHERWISE" FROM ABROAD.

-- "PREDJUDICIAL ACTIVITIES" ARE FORBIDDEN AS ARE PARTIES FORMED WITH THE INTENTION OF ENGAGING IN SUCH ACTIVITIES. DEFINED AS "PREJUDICIAL" ARE A WIDE RANGE OF ACTIVITIES DEEMED TO THREATEN INDEPENDENCE, SOVEREIGNTY OR SECURITY OF BANGLADESH. SPECIFICALLY FORBIDDEN ARE ATTEMPTS TO "VITIATE THE ACADEMIC ATMOSPHERE OR THE SMOOTH FUNCTIONING OF EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS OR TO ENCOURAGE POLITICAL ACTIVITY BY OR INDISCIPLINE AMONG STUDENTS."

- BEFORE THEY CAN OPERATE, POLITICAL PARTIES MUST SUBMIT TO THE GOVERNMENT NOT ONLY A PARTY CONSTITUTION AND A LIST OF FRONT ORGANIZATIONS BUT ALSO A "MANIFESTO AND PROGRAM ... LAYING DOWN ITS PLAN OF SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE PEOPLE ... PROPOSALS FOR LEGISLATIVE, EXECUTIVE AND ADMINISTRATIVE MEASURES .. AND ITS EXPECTATIONS AS TO THE EFFECT OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAM ..."

-- BEFORE IT CAN NOMINATE ANY CANDIDATES, A POLITICAL PARTY MUST SUBMIT ITS MANIFESTO AND PROGRAM AGAIN, THIS TIME TO THE ELECTION COMMISSION, AS WELL AS A STATEMENT OF THE NUMBER OF CANDIDATES TO BE NOMINATED AND THE EXTENT AND SOURCE OF ITS PLANNED CAMPAIGN EXPENDITURES.

-- ALL CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTIONS MUST BE RECORDED AND RECEIPTS ISSUED, AND ALL PARTY FUNDS MUST BE HELD IN AND EXPENDED FROM AN APPROVED BANK.

- UNDERGROUND ACTIVITY IS PROHIBITED AS ARE "ARMED -CADRES, VOLUNTEER CORPS OR ANY OTHER ORGANIZATION ... WHICH IS INTENDED .. TO OPERATE LIKE A DISCIPLINED FORCE."

-- POLITICAL PARTIES ARE FORBIDDEN TO CAST AAPERSIONS ON THEIR OPPONENTS, TO ATTEMPT TO DISRUPT THE ACTIVITIES OF THEIR OPPONENTS OR TO TRY TO GAIN VOTER SUPPORT THROUGH INTIMIDATION.

-- NO PERSON CAN RUN AS AN INDEPENDENT CANDIDATE. THOSE  
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WHO TRY TO DO SO WILL BE LIABLE TO PROSECUTION.

-- THE ELECTION COMMISSION MAY SUSPEND A PARTY FOR TWO YEARS IF IT IS FOUND GUILTY OF VIOLATING CERTAIN PROVISIONS OF THE REGULATION. FOR OTHER VIOLATIONS, A SPECIAL TRIBUNAL CONSISTING OF A JUDGE OF THE APPELLATE COURT CAN CONDUCT HEARINGS AND IF THE PARTY IS FOUND GUILTY DECLARE IT DISSOLVED AND ITS PROPERTIES AND FUNDS FORFEITED TO THE GOVERNMENT.

COMMENT. OBVIOUSLY, THE GOVERNMENT INTENDS TO KEEP A VERY TIGHT GRIP ON POLITICAL ACTIVITY. BY SPECIFICALLY PROHIBITING ANY PARTY WITH FOREIGN TIES OF ANY KIND, IT WOULD SEEM THAT ANY PARTY CALLING ITSELF COMMUNIST OR

MARXIST COULD BE EFFECTIVELY PREVENTED FROM ORGANIZING  
LEGALLY. THE BAN ON PARTIES WITH "PREJUDICIAL INTENTIONS"  
ALSO GIVES THE GOVERNMENT BROAD POWER TO PROHIBIT ANY NUM-  
BER OF POLITICAL FACTIONS IN THE COUNTRY. THE EMPHASIS  
UPON MANIFESTOS AND COMPLETE PROGRAMS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT  
OF THE COUNTRY, STRICT FINANCIAL REPORTING AND COMPLETE  
CANDIDATE LISTS IS ANOTHER METHOD THAT MAY BE USED TO  
DENY GOVERNMENT APPROVAL TO FRAGMENTARY GROUPS. REQUIRING  
ALL CAMPAIGN CRITICISM TO BE "OBJECTIVE", WITH THE  
GOVERNMENT PRESUMABLY AS THE ARBITER OF OBJECTIVITY,  
AMOUNTS TO CAMPAIGN CENSORSHIP AND A MECHANISM FOR MONITORING  
THE PARTIES THROUGHOUT THE CAMPAIGN. THIS IS UNLIKELY TO  
BE THE FINAL SET OF POLITICAL PARTY GUIDELINES. ITEM 14  
OF THE REGULATION GIVES THE GOVERNMENT BLANKET AUTHORITY  
TO REGULATE POLITICAL ACTIVITIES "FROM TIME TO TIME .. IN  
ANY MANNER AS IT MAY DEEM FIT." WE EXPECT THE BDG WILL MAKE  
USE OF THIS AUTHORITY TO KEEP POLITICS WITHIN THE LIMITS  
ACCEPTABLE TO IT.  
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## Message Attributes

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